

BLM-Nevada

Sage-grouse Conservation Efforts

BLM-Nevada has numerous ongoing efforts to improve management of sage-grouse habitat. This includes conducting threat assessments to sage-grouse habitat, mapping sagebrush plant communities and their use by sage-grouse, and implementing management actions to protect and restore existing sage-grouse habitat, particularly leks and brooding grounds. The following is an overview of projects currently underway in BLM-Nevada:

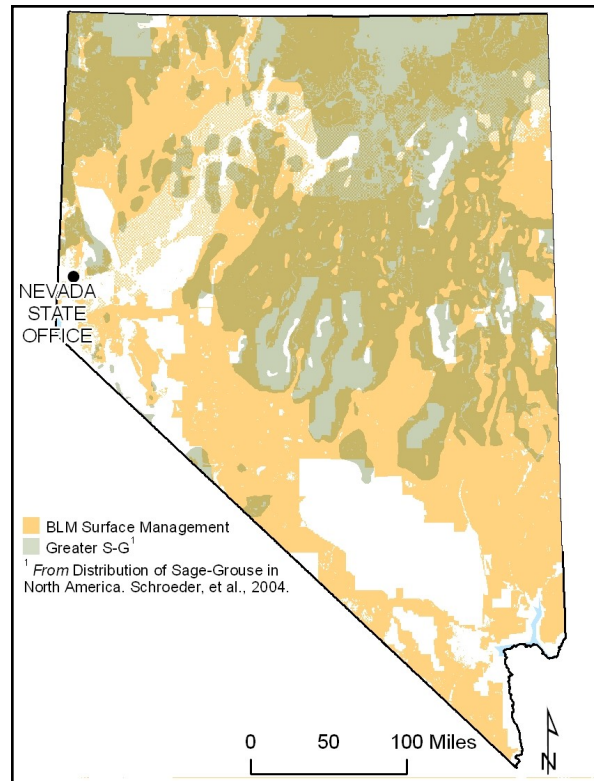
Falcon-Gondor Transmission Line Study: BLM-Nevada is in the seventh year of a 10-year post construction monitoring project in cooperation with University of Nevada-Reno, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The purpose of this project is to monitor the effects of power line transmission to sage-grouse movements, breeding, nesting, and overwintering success.

Central Great Basin Ecoregional Assessment : BLM-Nevada, collaborating with BLM-Utah and -California has initiated this broad-scale assessment that will identify where sagebrush plant communities and sage-grouse populations occur, and where broad-scale changes are likely to occur in western Utah, central Nevada, and eastern California.

Northern Great Basin Ecoregional Assessment: BLM-Nevada, collaborating with BLM-Oregon, -Idaho, and -Utah, is in the process of identifying regional goals and objectives for this recently completed broad assessment. This includes identifying objectives to conserve sagebrush habitat with an emphasis on occupied sage-grouse habitat and to prioritize areas to take management actions to protect and restore important sage-grouse habitat.

Statewide Sage-Grouse Core Habitat Mapping: BLM-Nevada is currently working with the Audubon Society to map core sage-grouse habitat. This effort will provide consistent maps of sage-grouse habitat following the identical protocol throughout the range of species.

Tuscarora Sagebrush Habitat Restoration Project: American Restoration and Recovery Act funding will be used to restore approximately 10,000 acres of sage-grouse habitat in the Elko District. Conservation efforts include seedings, weed treatments, and fencing to protect sagebrush communities. These projects will be implemented in May and continue through October 2010.



Statewide Guidance on Placement of Meteorological Towers (MET): An Instruction Memorandum (IM) was recently issued on the placement of MET towers and associated energy structures. The purpose of this IM is to provide a consistent approach for use of MET towers to protect sage-grouse habitat.

Sage-grouse Habitat Protection from, and Rehabilitation after, Wildfire: The Nevada Fire program has identified sage-grouse habitat as a high priority for wildfire suppression. The BLM-Nevada Fuels program, per Washington Office IM No. 2008-142, coordinates with resource program leads to identify priority sagebrush and sage-grouse habitat for protection in developing fuels projects, while accomplishing key management goals:

- Provide localized maps, based on the Interim Key Habitat for Sage-grouse and Sagebrush map, to local dispatch offices and initial- and extended-attack incident commanders for use in prioritizing wildfire suppression resources and designing suppression tactics.
- Assign a sage-grouse resource advisor to all extended-attack fires in or near priority sage-grouse habitat areas.
- Train sage-grouse resource advisors, prior to fire season, on wildfire suppression organization, objectives, tactics, and procedures to develop a cadre of qualified individuals.
- Pre-position additional fire suppression resources on critical fire weather days.
- Ensure line officers are involved in priority setting during periods of multiple fires.
- Avoid sage-grouse lek areas whenever possible when locating wildfire suppression facilities, including base camps, spike camps, drop points, staging areas, helibases, and helispots.
- Power wash all firefighting vehicles, to the extent possible, including engines, water tenders, personal vehicles, and ATVs prior to deploying in or near sage-grouse habitat areas to minimize noxious weed spread into these areas.
- Encourage firefighting vehicle use only on established roads and trails during wildfire suppression operations in or near priority sage-grouse habitat areas.
- Minimize burnout operations in priority sage-grouse habitat areas by constructing direct fire line whenever practical to do so.
- Utilize retardant and mechanized equipment to minimize burned acreage during initial attack.
- Reseeding of sage-grouse habitat is a high priority for stabilization and restoration treatments following wildfires.

